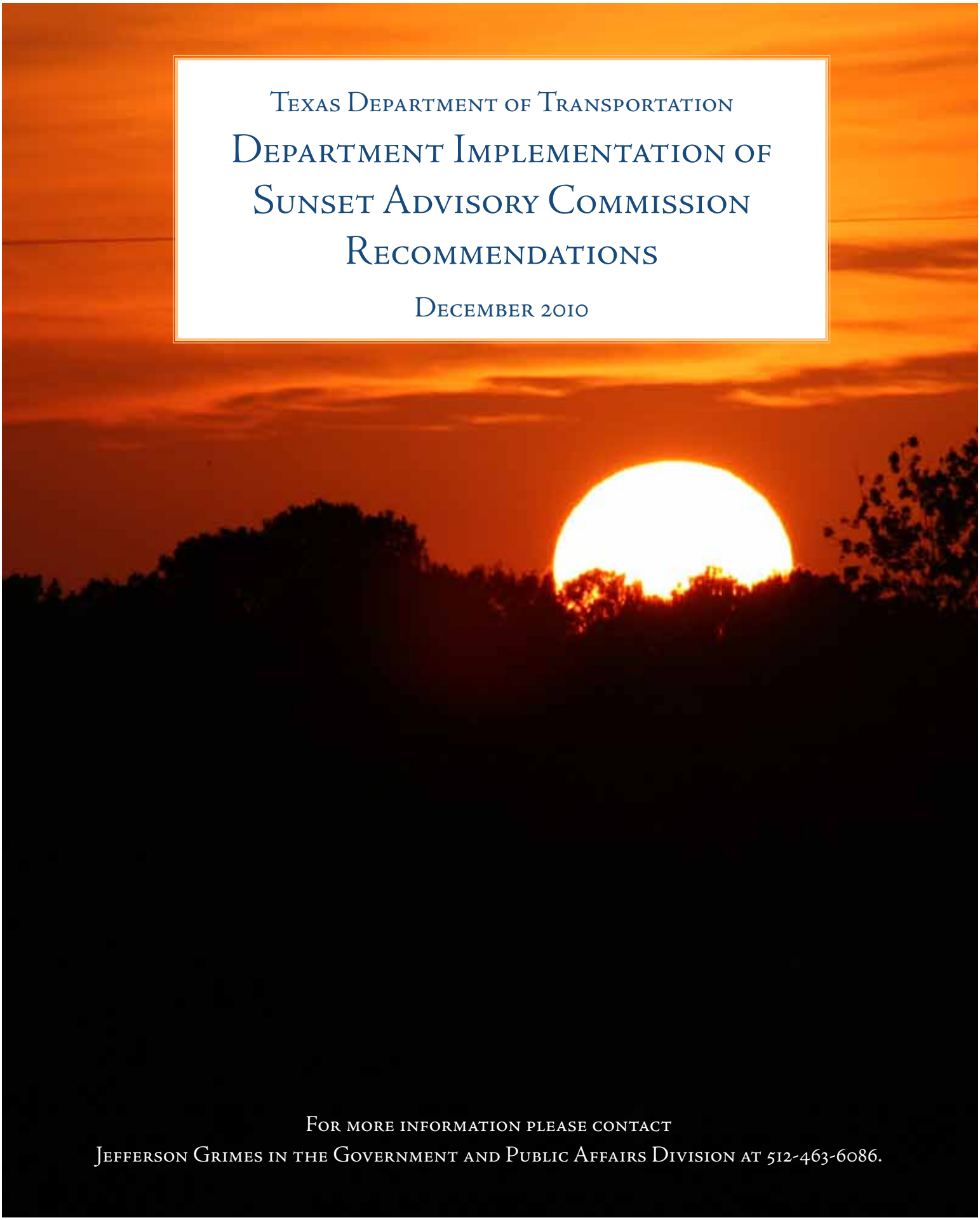


Texas Department of Transportation

Department Implementation of Sunset Advisory Commission Recommendations

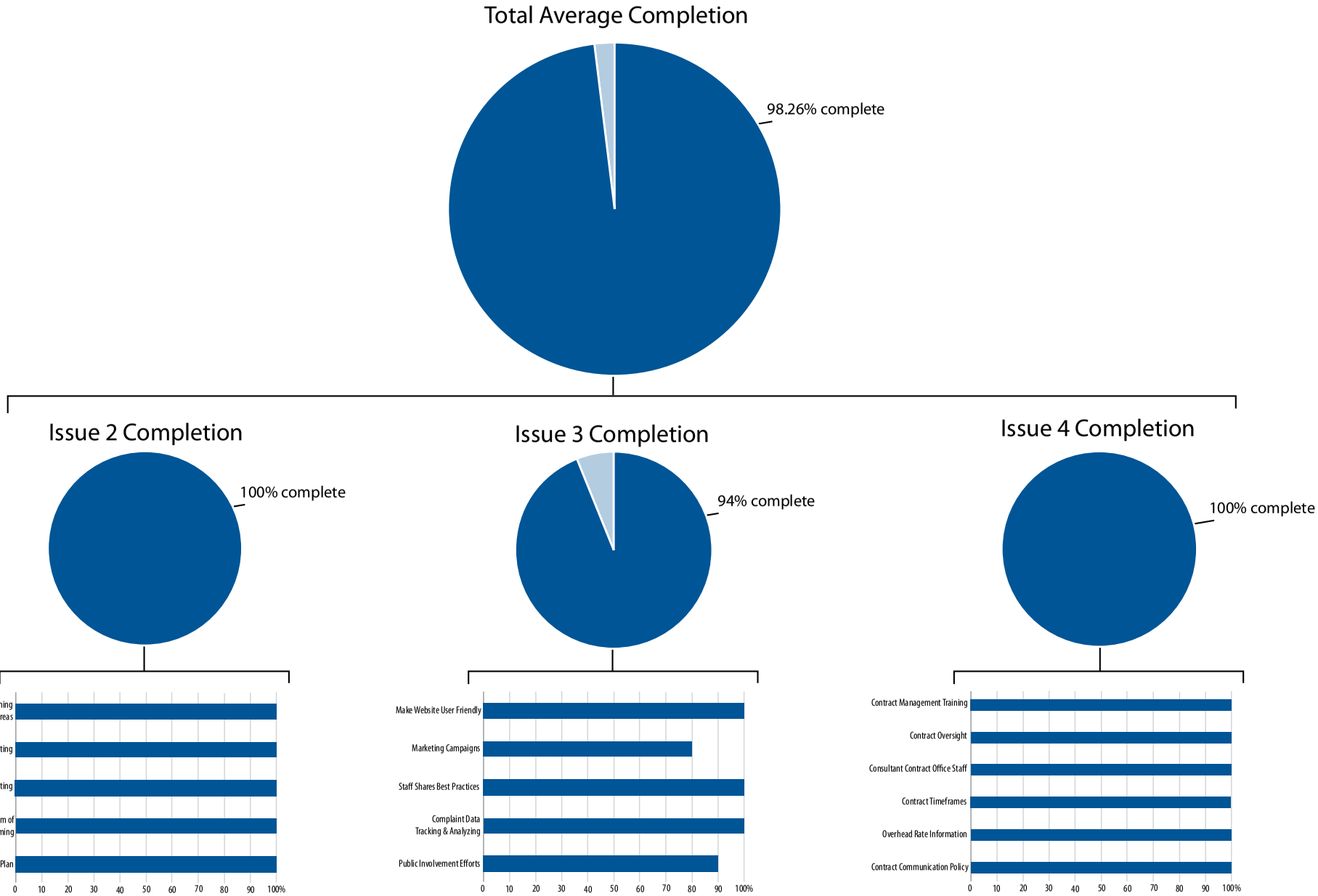
December 2010

For more information please contact
Jefferson Grimes in the Government and Public Affairs Division at 512-463-6086.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Sunset Average Completion

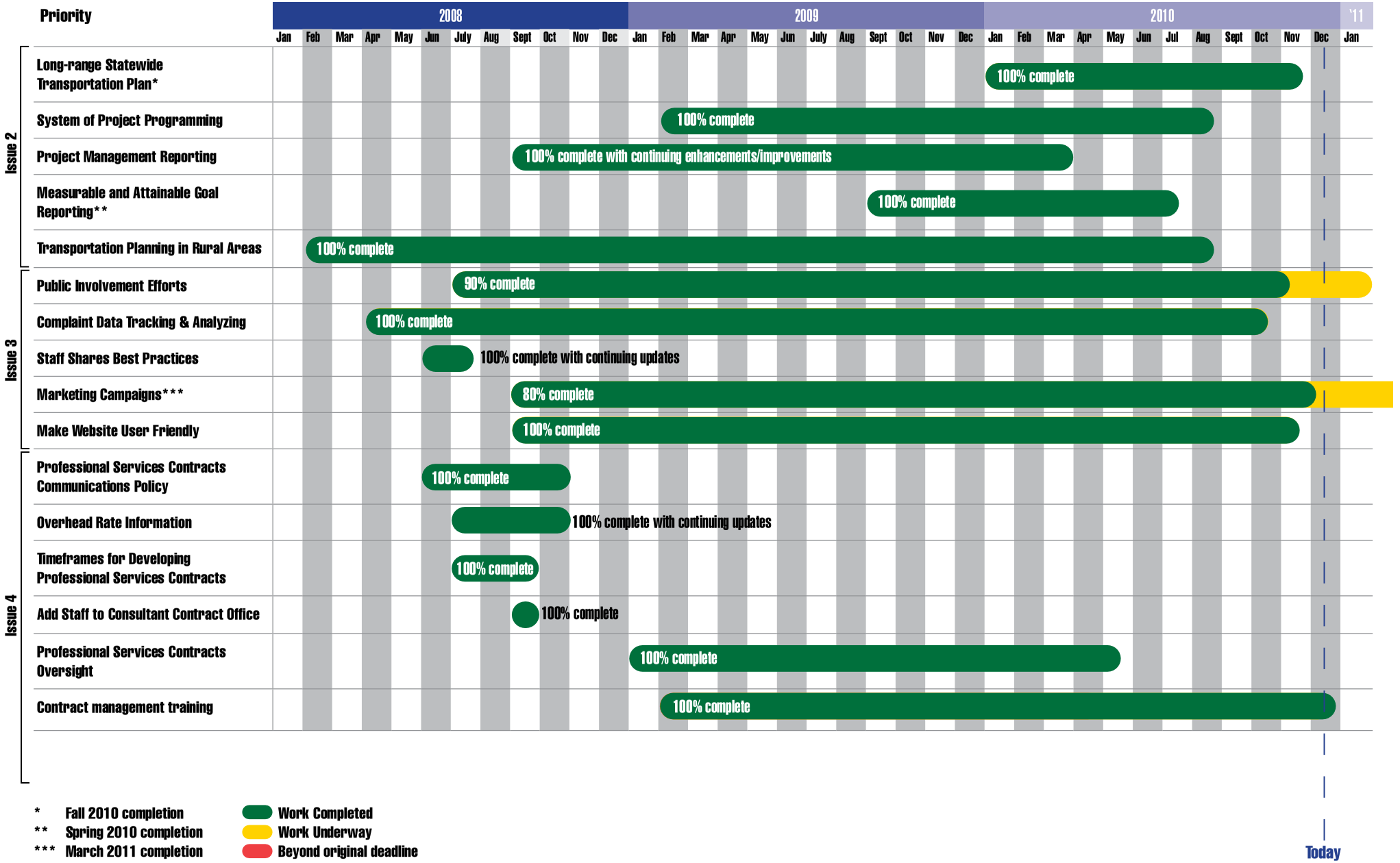
December 2010



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Sunset Progress

December 2010



* Fall 2010 completion
** Spring 2010 completion
*** March 2011 completion

Work Completed
Work Underway
Beyond original deadline

The Sunset Advisory Commission staff issued its recommendations for the Texas Department of Transportation in the summer of 2008. Public comments were received on these recommendations and public hearings were held resulting in final recommendations to the 81st Legislature. Sunset legislation continuing the Texas Department of Transportation did not pass during the 81st Legislative Session; however, many of the recommendations of the Sunset Advisory Commission did not require legislation and TxDOT has been working to implement the recommendations that did not require statutory changes. This is an account of those recommendations, the department's timeline for implementation, and descriptions of the department's efforts in implementing those Sunset recommendations.

Issue 2
Transportation Planning and Project Development Process

These two issues are linked and implementation of both will overlap initially before they fall into their proper sequence. The TxDOT strategic plan (Sunset Advisory Commission issue 2.4), was adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission in June 2010, is ultimately in service of the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP) which was adopted in November 2010 (Sunset Advisory Commission issue 2.1).

Require TxDOT to redevelop and regularly update the long-range Statewide Transportation Plan describing total system needs, establishing overarching statewide transportation goals and measuring progress toward those goals;

Start Date:
January 2010
End Date:
November 2010
Percentage completed to date:
100%
Responsible Party:
Mary Meyland (SPPM) and Jim Randall (TPP)

Summary: In May and August 2010, TxDOT held a series of open-house style meetings across the state to receive citizen input on the 24-year statewide plan. A draft report was prepared for public review in September 2010. The Texas Transportation Commission adopted the 2035 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan at their November 18, 2010 Commission meeting.

Require TxDOT, with input from transportation partners and policymakers, to develop a system to measure and report on progress in meeting transportation goals and milestones.

Start Date:
September 2009
End Date:
July 2010
Percentage completed to date:
100%
Responsible Party:
Mary Meyland (SPPM) and Jim Randall (TPP)

Summary: TxDOT has updated its 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. Public comments on the draft plan were incorporated into the document and were adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission in June 2010. In July 2010, the plan was submitted to and approved by the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor's Office.

Status details on both initiatives: TxDOT has implemented both of these recommendations by using a comprehensive approach that relied on public input, as well as new, statewide transportation goals and performance measures. This approach included changes and updates to the department's Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan (SLRTP), the Strategic Plan (SP) and the Unified Transportation Program (UTP). The department also convened external stakeholders in a rulemaking advisory committee to recommend changes to the department's transportation planning and programming rules. Each of these processes has been integral to developing a transportation plan that reflects the needs of Texas and provides reasonable strategies and goals for TxDOT to meet those needs. These processes and plans are described in detail below.

The **2011-2015 TxDOT Strategic Plan** guides department policies and processes. The plan lists specific goals, objectives, action steps, performance measures and targets for TxDOT. As a map for TxDOT planning efforts, the Strategic Plan guides the agency's responsibilities in the Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan and the UTP by aligning agency initiatives and projects with strategic goals.

In September 2009, the Texas Transportation Commission drafted the new strategic plan, and solicited statewide public comment through focus groups, public polling and employee surveys. The Texas Transportation Commission adopted the Strategic Plan in June 2010.

As part of the strategic planning process, and in a move toward greater accountability and transparency, TxDOT launched TxDOT Tracker on the department's website, www.txdot.gov. TxDOT Tracker is an interactive database that reports the department's performance on 27 key measures and indicators, including on-time and on-budget performance of construction contracts.

While the Strategic Plan is a guide to measure TxDOT operational progress, the 2035 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan is the state's 24-year planning blueprint. It is collaboration between TxDOT, local and regional decision-makers and transportation stakeholders, and it addresses the state's multimodal statewide transportation needs.

To begin drafting the **2035 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan,** TxDOT held a series of public forums to solicit input from Texans on the state's transportation needs and future multimodal transportation system. During the summer of 2010, TxDOT analyzed these comments and developed a draft plan. Based on those comments, the plan identifies and quantifies the state's system-wide transportation needs. It includes an inventory of – and public comment about – the state's current transportation modes and systems, and analyzes needed improvements and funding for those modes.

A second round of public meetings on the long range plan was held in August 2010, and a draft report was made available to the public. The Texas Transportation Commission approved the 2035 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan at their November 18, 2010 Commission meeting.

The **Unified Transportation Program** (UTP) guides project development. It lists projects to be developed within the first 10 years of the 24-year long range plan, and is based on existing and forecasted transportation revenue. The UTP distributes funding for 12 project categories including maintenance and construction. For each year of the UTP, projects are listed within their appropriate category with their estimated maintenance and construction costs. The Texas Transportation Commission approved the UTP on April 29, 2010.

The **Transportation Planning and Project Development Rulemaking Advisory Committee** was created by the Texas Transportation Commission in July 2009. Its members included representatives from metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), local governments, transit organizations, tolling authorities and the Federal Highway Administration. The committee studied revisions to department transportation planning and programming rules in Title 43 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 15, and created a new Chapter 16 to incorporate the new provisions.

The Rulemaking Advisory Committee presented draft rules to the Texas Transportation Commission in May 2010, and after public comments were received, it was adopted in August 2010. The work of this committee was essential to the 2035 Statewide Long Range Transportation Plan, the new goals for the 2011-2015 TxDOT Strategic Plan and will be considered in future UTPs.

Establish a transparent, well-defined and understandable system of project programming within TxDOT that integrates project milestones, forecasts and priorities.

Start Date:

February 2009

End Date:

August 2010

Percentage completed to date:

100%

Responsible Party:

John Barton (AEDEO) and Brian Ragland (FIN)

Summary: The Unified Transportation Program (UTP) Working Group issued its final report to TxDOT Administration in October 2009. On a parallel track, new proposed programming and project development rules drafted by the Transportation Planning and Project Development

Rulemaking Advisory Committee were considered by the Texas Transportation Commission in May 2010. Final adoption of the rules took place in August 2010.

Status details: The department implemented this recommendation on parallel tracks. Two groups – the UTP Working Group and the Transportation Planning and Project Development Rulemaking Advisory Committee – were convened to develop recommendations on the project programming process.

The UTP Working Group, composed of TxDOT and Federal Highway Administration staff and external stakeholders such as members of metropolitan planning organizations and councils of government, was tasked with establishing a new project planning and development tool in response to Sunset Advisory Commission recommendations.

The first Working Group meeting was conducted in February 2009, and the group appointed various subgroups to study specific and detailed issues. An interim progress report was presented to TxDOT Administration shortly before the 81st Legislature adjourned, and another report was presented during the July 2009 quarterly meeting of TxDOT district engineers, division directors and office directors.

In its final report, "*Work Group Findings and Recommendations*," presented to TxDOT Administration in October 2009, the group incorporated the following concepts into their recommendations: the critical need for reliable TxDOT financial forecasts to coordinate statewide planning and programming efforts; fiscal constraint in planning; and increased communication, transparency and accountability.

The report also recommended simplifying the UTP by reducing the number of categories of work, stressed that the UTP be multimodal, financially constrained and based on reliable cash flow forecasts. The group also suggested incorporating a new system of plans and programs in the UTP. They included a Vision Plan that focuses on statewide planning perspectives and efforts; a Project Development Plan that lists proposed projects with various levels of construction and development authorizations; and a Project Program that consists of a specified number of years' worth of projects. Like the rest of the UTP, these plans and programs would be based on financial forecasts and other cash flow considerations.

Texas Transportation Commission Minute Order 111891, dated July 30, 2009, outlined policies and guidance for appointing the Transportation Planning and Project Development Rulemaking Advisory Committee. The committee was charged with recommending changes to the department's transportation planning and project development programming rules. The 11-member committee included representatives from metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), counties, transit organizations, tolling authorities, small cities, councils of government and the Federal Highway Administration.

The department participated in several work meetings with the Rulemaking Advisory Committee and, based on input from the advisory committee, drafted planning and programming rules changes for Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 15 and the creation of a new Chapter 16. Notices for public comment were issued in the Texas Register on two different occasions as an opportunity

for transportation partners and citizens to provide feedback on the potential changes to TxDOT's planning and programming rules.

Public comments were used by the Rulemaking Advisory Committee and the department to form the basis for new proposed rules that establish a comprehensive transportation planning and project development program that is transparent, well-defined and understandable. The recently adopted rules require that TxDOT develop a long-range plan that outlines long-term transportation goals and provides for measurable targets; a mid-range plan that specifies criteria for project selection; defines funding categories, and defines planning, design and construction phases of major projects; and a short-term plan that details funding by phase, a right-of-way plan, a letting plan and progress summaries.

The rules further require that TxDOT's planning and project development program include: selection criteria for the department to include each MPO in the statewide transportation plan and be based on the Texas Transportation Commission's transportation goals and measurable targets; statewide connectivity project benchmarks and implementation guidelines; an extended cash forecast; funding formulas for transportation projects; allocation formulas for MPOs and related performance measures; flexibility provisions that allow TxDOT and MPOs to accelerate or delay projects based on cash forecasting; and consistent, clear and understandable reporting requirements.

On May 4, 2010, the Rulemaking Advisory Committee voted unanimously to bring the draft rules before the Texas Transportation Commission. The Texas Transportation Commission gave preliminary approval to the draft rules at its May 2010 meeting and, following a public comment period, approved the final adoption of the rules in August 2010. These new rules become effective on January 1, 2011.

The department has begun the process of implementing these new rules. TxDOT is preparing to hold the newly required regional public meetings regarding the development of the 2012 UTP throughout the state beginning in January 2011. Meetings will be held in Lubbock, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. These meetings will provide an opportunity for the department to meet one-on-one with transportation stakeholders, as well as the public, and describe to them the department's transportation priorities, present a draft Unified Transportation Program (UTP) and discuss how projects are funded and the criterion associated with the various funding formulas. These meetings will also include a discussion of the project selection process which governs how projects are selected and prioritized. A public hearing on the department's project selection process is scheduled for the February 2011 Texas Transportation Commission meeting and the adoption of the 2012 UTP is scheduled for the April 2011 Texas Transportation Commission Meeting.

Require TxDOT districts to develop detailed work programs driven by milestones for major projects and other statewide goals for smaller projects.

Start Date:

September 2008

End Date:

March 2010

Percentage completed to date:

100%, with continuing enhancements and improvements

Responsible Party:

Mary Meyland (SPPM) and Mark Marek (DES)

Summary: TxDOT has employed a new project management tracking program called Primavera Version 6 (P6). P6 allows program users to access information about transportation projects in one database in real time. P6 was instrumental in TxDOT's launch of Project Tracker.

Status details: In September 2008, TxDOT deployed the Project Development Management System (PDMS). PDMS was the department's internal, first-generation project management reporting system used to track project development milestones. TxDOT used the source data within PDMS to launch Project Tracker. Project Tracker is an interactive project information database that serves as the gateway to all of TxDOT's project-related information. Project Tracker can be found on TxDOT's website, www.txdot.gov.

Project Tracker has been updated and enhanced to follow progress on special programs such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and Riders 55 and 56 from the General Appropriations Act, 81st Legislature.

In September 2009, TxDOT introduced Primavera Version 6 (P6), the next generation of project management software tools, to give TxDOT managers real-time project schedules, and ensure accountability for project design resources.

P6 allows project managers to create project schedules for project development work beginning with preliminary tasks such as surveying, environmental clearance, right of way acquisition and utility coordination, through schematic and final planning, and contract letting.

By December 2009, the department had completed its introductory level P6 training for project managers, and transferred project data from PDMS to the P6 system. The Project Tracker web-based reports began being supported by the P6 tool in March 2010.

Require TxDOT to establish, and provide funding and support for transportation planning in rural areas of the state.

Start Date:

February 2008

End Date:

August 2010

Percentage completed to date:

100%

Responsible Party:

John Ewald (OGC) and Jim Randall (TPP)

Summary: TxDOT developed draft rules incorporating rural planning organizations into its planning and programming processes. These rules were adopted in August 2010.

Status details: TxDOT staff submitted their recommendations on this issue to the House Transportation Committee's Subcommittee on Planning Authorities in May 2008. The Committee's interim report was issued later that year, recommending that the Legislature consider enabling legislation to create rural planning organizations. Legislation regarding this issue was contained in the conference committee report of HB 300. This language acknowledged that rural planning organizations can form under current statute, and would require the department to consider the recommendations of rural planning organizations in project and planning activities in those areas of the state. However, current law does not require the establishment of, or funding for, rural planning organizations.

To the extent possible without enabling legislation, TxDOT made revisions to its current planning and project development rules incorporating the concepts and intent of HB 300 regarding rural planning organizations. These rule changes are part of revisions to the department's comprehensive planning and programming administrative rules compiled by the Transportation Planning and Project Development Rulemaking Advisory Committee. These draft rules were given preliminary approval by the Texas Transportation Commission at its May 2010 meeting and, after a public comment period, were adopted in August 2010.

Issue 3
Public Involvement

Require TxDOT to develop and implement a public involvement policy that guides and encourages more meaningful public involvement efforts agency wide.

Start Date:

July 2008

End Date:

January 2011

Percentage completed to date:

90%

Responsible Party:

Jefferson Grimes (GPA) and Dianna Noble (ENV)

Summary: Texas Southern University (TSU) has evaluated TxDOT's public involvement strategies and developed recommendations on a public involvement policy that will be presented to the Texas Transportation Commission in December 2010.

Status details: A work group of representatives from TxDOT's Administration, Environmental Affairs, Government and Public Affairs, Transportation Planning and Programming divisions, Office of General Counsel and Office of Civil Rights was established to define acceptable public involvement practices for department projects and programs. This group reviewed best practices from other states and public involvement activities required by existing state and federal regulations, rules and policies. Additionally, this work group recommended an external evaluation of TxDOT's public involvement activities by TSU.

TSU has evaluated current practices and developed recommendations to improve TxDOT's public involvement processes. In addition, TSU has developed an overarching public involvement policy statement. The Texas Transportation Commission will discuss this policy at its December 2010 Commission Workshop. The policy will also be considered for adoption by the Commission at a subsequent meeting.

In assessing TxDOT's public involvement activities and developing draft recommendations, TSU has: collected information from TxDOT on existing public involvement tools; reviewed public involvement meetings throughout the state to identify projects as case studies; determined criteria to assess TxDOT's public involvement methods; conducted interviews with a diverse mix of citizens who have attended or participated in TxDOT meetings or hearings; and attended a series of meetings, hearings and town hall forums to observe presentations, materials, the presenter's interface with the audience and meeting locations.

Additionally, TxDOT has developed a public involvement training course. This course will be revised after adoption of the public involvement policy by the Texas Transportation Commission. Additional courses may be added to address the focus of the new policy.

Require TxDOT to develop standard procedures for documenting complaints and for tracking and analyzing complaint data.

Start Date:

April 2008

End Date:

October 2010

Percent completed:

100% with ongoing updates

Responsible Parties:

Brent Dollar (GPA) and Ann Zeeck (GPA)

Summary: TxDOT launched a new, statewide complaint reporting and tracking system called CRAFT (Customer Relationship and Feedback Tracking) on October 1, 2010.

Status details: Initially, the department's existing electronic document management system (TxDocs) was used to track complaints because of its availability to employees in all districts, divisions and offices who were managing correspondence documents, including complaints. The complaint process became one of four pilot projects selected in early 2008 by TxDOT's Electronic Data Management System 2 (EDMS2) Workgroup to increase use of the TxDocs system.

Beginning in April 2008, TxDOT developed a complaint business process through the EDMS2 Pilot workgroup project. A Customer Contact Team from each district, division and office was trained on the system, and in April 2009, the department began implementing the complaints process statewide in TxDocs. In the months that followed, TxDOT refined the complaint reporting process and improved data quality.

While TxDocs met some of the department's requirements for complaint tracking, the system continued to have limitations so TxDOT began the process of finding a more suitable replacement. The Florida Department of Transportation's FDOTracker system was selected and has been adapted to TxDOT's architecture. CRAFT was launched in October 2010. The Government and Public Affairs and Technology Services divisions are fine-tuning specific features and functionality based on user feedback. The system allows TxDOT customers to enter their issue on a Web form that feeds directly into CRAFT for routing and processing. CRAFT statistical data will be available for public view on www.txdot.gov in the near future.

TxDOT should provide a formal process for staff with similar responsibilities to share best practices information.

Start Date:

June 2008

End Date:

Initially completed in July 2008. Updates to the TxDOT intranet web and SharePoint sites are made continually. Best practices discussion items continue to be placed on the agenda of all statewide and regional staff meetings.

Percentage completed to date:

100% complete with continuing updates.

Responsible Party:

Nancy-Ellen Soteriou (HRD) and Tim Powers (RSC-North)

Summary: TxDOT has several methods for employees to share best practices information including SharePoint and team rooms on the department's internal online learning center, i-Way.

Status details: TxDOT has initiated numerous activities to share information across business units. Information sharing takes places in various forms.

SharePoint is used by division, district and region leadership and employees for internal sharing of information via posted documents, posting of questions and best practices and work on statewide initiatives.

Team Rooms are located on the department's Learning Management System (LMS) known internally as i-Way. This allows for private, public and moderated Team Rooms to be established, to post documents, have threaded discussions and share best practices. As of August 2010, there were 151 active Team Rooms used by various project teams.

Divisions, districts, offices and regions use Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to share common information and practices. SOPs are also documented in policy manuals and user manuals for technical and non-technical topics.

Desk references are also used at the business unit level. Many divisions, districts, offices and regions have adopted the use of desk references to map technical, administrative and non-technical processes which are shared across business units by posting to division's, district's, office's and region's internal websites. Numerous training courses and training events are held; these courses and events contain best practices as a part of the curriculum, along with open discussion sessions to share best practices. Networking is also encouraged as a part of these training courses so best solutions to common process and business applications can be discovered and discussed.

Many events and information sessions are recorded and placed on the department's internal website, Crossroads, or the i-Way. These sessions are distributed to divisions, districts, offices and regions for viewing in employee forums or business unit meetings.

TxDOT should provide central coordination of the department's major marketing campaigns.

Start Date:

Fall 2008

Assessment Completed:

December 2008 (Outside consultant assessed TxDOT's current practice of separate marketing campaigns/purchase of media ads.)

End Date:

March 2011

Percentage completed to date:

80%

Responsible Party:

Coby Chase (GPA)

Summary: Following an outside consultant assessment of the department's marketing functions and campaigns, TxDOT is preparing a plan to centrally coordinate its marketing efforts.

Status details: Executive Director Amadeo Saenz has appointed a permanent internal committee to monitor and shape all agency advertising, outreach, policies, processes, and procedures. Currently the committee is inventorying all campaigns and awareness efforts, standardizing contracting, working on an umbrella strategic advertising and marketing plan, and developing measurement methods. A formal request for proposals will be out for solicitation to secure a qualified pool of vendors that will handle the department's advertising and marketing needs.

TxDOT should make its website easier to use.

Start Date:

Fall 2008

End Date:

November 2010

Percentage completed to date:

100% with ongoing updates

Responsible Party:

Michael Sledge (GPA)

Summary: TxDOT has added new interactive databases to its website to allow visitors an opportunity to review construction information and track the department's performance on 27 different key measures. A usability study has been conducted so content delivery can be improved.

Status details: TxDOT's new, streamlined website was launched December 1, 2008. Project Tracker, which provides updated, detailed information on thousands of projects under development, was added to the website. In addition, information related to Rider 55 and Rider 56 from the 81st Legislature, General Appropriations Act, provides website visitors an interactive way to examine lists of congested roadways in the state, review pavement condition ratings, and examine how maintenance funds spent in their area will impact their roadways.

In March 2010, TxDOT Tracker was added to the department's website. Like its project counterpart, TxDOT Tracker is also an interactive database that allows users to view department performance measures such as construction, pavement conditions, traffic fatalities and various congestion indexes.

Updates to the website are regularly implemented based on public comments and feedback. With the assistance of an external entity, the department completed an evaluation of the public's perspective of www.txdot.gov. This evaluation included researching the usability and effectiveness of the website and examining opportunities to improve content delivery. Recommendations from the usability study to improve content delivery and other aspects of the website are being reviewed to determine how to best integrate into the website. Improvements and enhancements will continue on www.txdot.gov based on recommendations from the July 2010 website usability study.

Issue 4
Contracting Functions

TxDOT should develop clear communication policies regarding contract solicitations for its professional services contracts.

Start Date:

June 2008

End Date:

October 2008

Percentage completed to date:

100%

Responsible Party:

Janice Mullenix (GSD)

Summary: TxDOT has amended pertinent sections of its contract management manual to provide clearer communication policies.

Status details: The Contract Management Manual, Chapter 1, Section 4, was amended on October 1, 2008, to require development of a detailed communications plan and to specify the contents of that plan.

Contract Management Manual, Chapter 1, Section 7, was also amended to provide for execution of a non-disclosure statement by relevant contracting personnel on each contract. The Contract Services Section (CSS) of the General Services Division developed generic forms to develop a communications plan and a non-disclosure statement. CSS also worked with the divisions that oversee professional services contract procurements to create a customized form tailored to the most common types of professional services contracts. These templates are published online for department contract specialists. In early discussions with Sunset Advisory Commission staff during the review process, it became apparent that these areas needed review and strengthening. These changes were implemented in advance of the final Sunset Advisory Commission report. To promote overall compliance with department contracting policy and procedures, the General Services Division will submit this area to the Audit Office as a candidate for review as they develop their annual Audit Plan for the department. CSS will continue to solicit feedback from stakeholders and make improvements in the department's contracting practices as required.

TxDOT should provide additional information on overhead rates to districts and ensure that they use it.

Start Date:

July 2008

End Date:

October 2008

Percentage completed to date:

100% complete, with continuing updates. Ongoing efforts will result in periodic updates to overhead rate information provided to the districts, regions, divisions and offices, and contained within the Contract Management and Administration training course. The Contract Management and Administration training course is offered each year at various locations and times to ensure all appropriate personnel are provided with this training.

Responsible Party:

Camille Thomason (DES) and Janice Mullenix (GSD)

Summary: TxDOT has updated its required contract training to include negotiation and establishment of overhead rates, and has improved the process that provides overhead rate data to district and division contract negotiators.

Status details: The new Contract Management and Administration training course now covers negotiation and establishment of overhead rates. All department staff involved in contract negotiation is required to receive this training. The department has revised and improved the manner in which audited overhead rate data is provided to the district and division negotiators in the pre-negotiation reports. The Design Division's Consultant Contract Office Section (CCO) staff review negotiated overhead rates and compare them to the audited overhead rates in pre-negotiation reports prior to the execution of these contracts. They also input and maintain overhead rate data on a contract specific basis for future negotiations. These revisions have been presented to industry professionals. Refinements in the evaluation and negotiation of overhead rates will be developed and provided to the districts and divisions based on industry input and the analysis of data collected on completed negotiations.

TxDOT should set timeframes for each major step in the development of professional services contracts.

Start Date:
July 2008
End Date:
September 2008
Percentage completed to date:
100%
Responsible Party:
Camille Thomason (DES)

Summary: TxDOT has established specific time frames for each step in the professional service contract process. This is now standard operating procedure for the department's professional selection service program.

Status details: Deadlines for each major step in the development of professional services contracts were established by the Design Division's Consultant Contract Office (CCO) defined in a September 2008 memorandum from TxDOT Administration. The memorandum established time frames for contracting processes. These processes are incorporated into TxDOT policy and manuals, and have been disseminated to all districts, regions, divisions and offices. To foster compliance with these processes, the Design Division will recommend this area during the department's annual audit program.

Additionally, department regional staff has established standard operating procedures, with more specific selection process time frames, to reach contract execution within 100 days of receipt of Letters of Interest. Those new time frames now replace the time frames established in 2008, and will be used by all users of the selection process inside and outside of region management.

TxDOT should consider providing additional staff to support its Consultant Contract Office.

Start Date:
September 2008
End Date:
September 2008
Percentage completed to date:
100%
Responsible Party:
Steve Simmons (DED)

Summary: TxDOT has hired four additional staff to the Consultant Contract Office.

Status detail: Four additional staff positions were added to the Consultant Contract Office in September 2008, the hiring of the additional staff concluded in August 2010. Responsibilities of the new staff include, for example, support of routine agreement review, direct support of the qualifications-based selection process, maintaining contracting rules, supporting delivery and maintenance of

training, implementing and maintaining the Professional Services Contract Administration and Management System, and numerous other necessary tasks to maintain the qualifications-based contracting program.

TxDOT should strengthen oversight and accountability of professional services contracts in its district offices.

Start Date:

January 2009

End Date:

May 2010

Percentage completed to date:

100%

Responsible Party:

David Casteel (AEDDO)

Summary: TxDOT has moved some of its department responsibilities to multi-district regions. These regions allow the agency to consistently implement procedures that improve contract services.

Status detail: TxDOT has made significant progress toward modernizing the agency, including regionalizing some department functions to maximize workloads.

The department's regionalization efforts reduced the number of offices overseeing consultant contracts from 25 districts to four regions to allow for consistent and timely contract reviews. Regional directors and project development staff have developed detailed business implementation plans, including improved consultant selection, negotiation and management plans.

Professional contract managers in the regional offices lead procurement and contract negotiations to ensure consistent contract oversight is established and regional offices maintain contract oversight throughout the project. To ensure consistency, district project managers involved in specific tasks will be monitored by the regions. Divisions providing overall policy guidance are working with personnel in the four regions to ensure consistency and quality in the professional services contracting program. TxDOT has implemented consultant oversight measures, and completed service level agreements for participants from district, regional and division offices. Project schedules and budgets will be developed and updated yearly, and shared with industry stakeholders and districts. Final standard operating procedures were developed and reviewed in concert with industry, and those standard operating procedures were approved and implemented by January 2010. Training was completed in May 2010, along with the implementation of the standard operating procedures for regional, division and district staff. Division offices, such as the Turnpike Authority, Bridge and Environmental Affairs, to name a few, follow the state's standard contracting procedures that are in place and referenced in the standard operating procedures. Consideration is being given to the evaluation of professional services contracting by the divisions to determine if there are opportunities for the consolidation of certain tasks, similar to the regions, to gain efficiency and improve consistency.

TxDOT should require contract management training for its professional services project managers and other employees involved in professional services contract administration.

Start Date:

February 2009

End Date:

December 2010

Percentage completed to date:

100% complete

Responsible Party:

Janice Mullenix (GSD)

Summary: TxDOT has developed a two-part training curriculum for professional services contract administrators where employees can receive in-depth instruction on the correct handling of department contracting policies. All the component parts of this training curriculum are now in place and are being actively offered to meet demand.

Status details: A mandatory training program has been developed for professional and scientific services contract employees. The mandatory training program consists of two parts. The first part is a one-day course offered via video teleconference to provide initial training for all existing contract managers on high-risk professional services contracts. More than 700 employees completed this class in 2009. This course is now available on the department's i-Way online training system for new and reassigned employees who require immediate training.

The second part of the program is a comprehensive four-day course curriculum on the details of professional and scientific services contracting. The four-day course for engineering, architecture, and surveying contracts (high-risk areas) was offered eight times in 2009 and four times in 2010. TxDOT plans to offer the training about four times a year. It is an instructor-led course with a maximum class attendance of 35 employees per session. This course is taught by highly experienced engineers and lawyers with detailed knowledge of TxDOT contracting needs and policies. To date, 491 employees have completed this course.

The four-day course for all other professional and scientific services contracts (such as contracts for historical, archaeological, biological, right of way acquisition provider, appraisal, landscape architect, accounting, outside counsel, and private consulting services) is being offered by contract lawyers from the Contract Services Section of the General Services Division in December 2010. It will continue to be offered to meet demand, estimated to be at least twice per year.